

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

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CIAE-00 DODE-00 INR-07 NSAE-00 PA-01 USIA-06
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FM AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
TO SECSTATE WSHDC 7119
INFO AMCONSUL LENINGRAD
USDOC WASHDC

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USDOC FOR BEWT (REICH)

E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: EEWT, PDIP, BTRA, UR, US
SUBJECT: EMBASSY PROTEST OF INCIDENT AS US COMMERCIAL OFFICE

1. ACTING POLITICAL COUNSELOR, ACCOMPANIED BY COMATT, PRESENTED DEPUTY CHIEF OF MFA USA DIVISION FEDOSEYEV WITH AIDE-MEMOIRE JANUARY 25 PROTESTING RECENT INCIDENT AT USCO IN WHICH MILITIA REFUSED TO ADMIT SOVIET WHO HAD LEGITIMATE BUSINESS THERE. TEXT OF AIDE-MEMOIRE GIVEN BELOW. FEDOSEYEV SAID HE HAD NOT HEARD OF INCIDENT, AND NOTED THAT MFA PROTOCOL DIVISION NORMALLY HANDLED SUCH QUESTIONS. BUT HE UNDERTOOK TO LOOK INTO THE MATTER.

2. TEXT OF AIDE-MEMOIRE FOLLOWS: BEGIN QUOTE. THE FOLLOWING INCIDENT TOOK PLACE IN FRONT OF THE U.S. COMMERCIAL OFFICE AT 10:30 AM ON JANUARY 20, 1978, IN CONNECTION WITH THE TECHNICAL SEMINAR/MINI-EXHIBIT ON THE INDUSTRIAL THEME OF PRINTING AND GRAPHIC ARTS, "GRAFIKA '78" (JANUARY 17-19, 1978):
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A REPRESENTATIVE OF "PRAVDA" PUBLISHINGHOUSE WAS BARRED BY SOVIET MILITIAMEN POSTED IN FRONT OF THE COMMERCIAL OFFICE FROM ENTERING THE OFFICE FOR THE PURPOSE OF DELIVERING PHOTOGRAPHS TO AN AMERICAN BUSINESSMAN, MR. LEO LEHRER, NATIONAL MARKETING MANAGER FOR THE ELECTRONIC MECHANICAL

PRODUCTS CO. (EMPCO). MR. LEHRER HAD VISITED PRAVDA'S PRINTING PLAN AT THE LATTER'S INVITATION ON THE PREVIOUS DAY (JANUARY 19). DURING MR. LEHRER'S VISIT TO PRAVDA, WHICH WAS UNDERTAKEN PRIMARILY FOR THE PURPOSE OF INSPECTING A PIECE OF MALFUNCTIONING EMPCO EQUIPMENT (KNOWN AS THE SD-602) INSTALLED AT PRAVDA, SEVERAL PICTURES WERE TAKEN OF HIM BY A PHOTOGRAPHER OF THE NEWS-PAPER. IT WAS THESE PHOTOGRAPHS WHICH THE PRAVDA REPRESENTATIVE WAS ATTEMPTING TO DELIVER TO MR. LEHRER AT THE COMMERCIAL OFFICE ON THE MORNING OF JANUARY 20.

DESPITE A CAREFUL ORAL EXPLANATION, IN THE RUSSIAN LANGUAGE, OF THE ABOVE FACTS TO THE MILITIAMEN ON DUTY THAT MORNING, THE PRAVDA REPRESENTATIVE WAS ADMANTLY REFUSED PERMISSION TO ENTER THE COMMERCIAL OFFICE.

THE MILITIAMEN BASED THEIR DECISION ON THE FACT THAT THE REPRESENTATIVE FROM PRAVDA HAD NO WRITTEN INVITATION IN HIS POSSESSION. WHEN ASKED WHETHER A LETTER FROM THE COMMERCIAL OFFICE WOULD SERVE AS AN INVITATION, THE MILITIAMEN SAID IT WOULD NOT. WHEN ASKED TO SPECIFY WHAT SORT OF DOCUMENT WOULD, UNDER THE CIRCUMSTANCES, QUALIFY AS LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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A "WRITTEN INVITATION," THE MILITIAMEN SAID THAT HE DID NOT KNOW.

THE EMBASSY IS PUZZLED AND CONCERNED BY THIS INCIDENT WHICH INTERFERED WITH THE NORMAL PROCESS OF COMMERCIAL INTERCHANGE FLOWING FROM AN EVENT IN THE U.S. COMMERCIAL OFFICE WHICH HAD BEEN APPROVED BY BOTH THE SOVIET CHAMBER OF COMMERCE AND GOSKOMIZDAT. IT SHOULD ALSO BE NOTED HERE THAT PRAVDA HOPES TO PURCHASE ONE MORE EMPCO SD-602 FOR USE IN ITS PUBLISHING OPERATION AND THAT THAT MACHINE NOW RESIDES PHYSICALLY IN THE COMMERCIAL OFFICE PENDING CONCLUSION OF FINAL CONTRACT NEGOTIATIONS.

THIS IS UNFORTUNATELY NOT THE FIRST TIME WE HAVE HAD CAUSE TO CITE INCIDENTS OF THIS KIND.

THE EMBASSY STRONGLY PROTESTS THIS ARBITRARY AND BASELESS INTERFERENCE IN THE LEGITIMATE FUNCTION OF THE U.S. COMMERCIAL OFFICE IN MOSCOW.

IT ASKS THAT THE MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS
PROVIDE SUITABLE INSTRUCTION TO MILITIAMEN OUTSIDE
THE U.S. COMMERCIAL OFFICE NOT TO INTERFERE WITH
ACCESS TO THE FACILITY BY PERSONS WHO HAVE LEGITIMATE
BUSINESS THERE, PARTICULARLY WHEN AN OFFICIAL OF
THE COMMERCIAL OFFICE INDICATES HIS INTENTION
THAT SUCH ACCESS BE PERMITTED. END QUOTE.
MATLOCK

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
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Draft Date: 25 jan 1978
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Decaption Note:
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Disposition Case Number: n/a
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Disposition Date: 20 Mar 2014
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